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Executive Registry
7-5156

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Foreign Reaction to Proposed Earth
Satellite Vehicle

~~There is summarized below foreign reaction to the announcement by the President of plans for an Earth Satellite Vehicle as part of the program of the International Geophysical Year:~~

a. Soviet reaction. The White House announcement of plans to launch an earth satellite was treated initially in Communist propaganda in a manner characteristic of embarrassment or uncertainty. Radio Moscow withheld the news for three days before giving a brief account of the project, omitting the President's invitation to share in its results. Satellite radios variously ignored the project, used Moscow's brief account, or in a few cases attempted to establish priority in the field for the USSR. Subsequently the Soviets have broadcast technical and scientific accounts of earth satellites and of problems involved in space flight. Most of these accounts refer briefly and matter of fact to US plans for earth satellites in connection with IGY.

b. West European reaction. Factual reporting, sometimes with additional technical background, was predominantly followed by most European newspapers and journals. Where present, editorial reaction varied from favorable to unfavorable and cynical. Many newspapers emphasized that the ESV represented another significant step in scientific advancement. A number of editorials saw a relationship between the announcement of the ESV and the Geneva Conference on peaceful use of atomic energy, and feel that the launching of the ESV as part

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of a cooperative scientific endeavor further increased the prospects for world peace. Other comments indicated a belief that a new area of East-West rivalry was opened by the possibility of launching an ESV and pointed out possible military implications and uses for the satellite; some comments indicated a fear of uncontrolled scientific advance, as evidenced by the A-bomb, the H-bomb, and now the ESV.

A sampling survey made by USIA in August indicates: (a) awareness of a plan to launch a satellite had spread to from half to two-thirds of the general public in Great Britain, West Germany, Austria, Italy, France and Belgium. (b) Despite the USSR's rapid follow-up to the US earth satellite announcement, the US was largely successful in establishing primacy. The US was cited as first announcing the plan by the great bulk of the public in these countries aware of the development, and by even larger proportions among opinion-leading upper status respondents. (c) Favorable reactions to the satellite project outweigh adverse views on the average, but they do so by no large margin, and considerable proportions register uncertainty as to whether the new development will be used for good or bad purposes.

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HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

cc: DAD(C)/OSI
Chief, RQM/ [redacted]

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TRANSMITTAL

(Date)

TO:

BUILDING

ROOM NO.

REMARKS:

(Per request from [redacted] Mr.
Bissell briefed DCI on this subject
Saturday, 29 October 55) djm

FROM:

BUILDING

ROOM NO.

EXTENSION

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TRANSMITTAL

SECRET

24 October 1955

(Date)

TO: SA-DCI(P&C)

BUILDING
Administration

ROOM NO.

REMARKS:

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Dick:

The attached is my effort to reflect an Agency position on the earth satellite project. I have sent the original to Mr. Dulles. If you have any suggestions, however, I am sure that it is not too late to make amendments.

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L.K.W.

FROM: DD/S

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